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There's a 6 A.M. in Japan?

Learn how to ask for and tell what time it is

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Also Appears In: Conversational Japanese for Absolute Beginners, Absolute Beginner Season 2

Dialogue | Vocabulary | Lesson Notes | Grammar | Lesson Transcript | Comments

Dialogue - Japanese

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Kanji | English | Rōmaji | Hiragana | All

(Skype)

A: こんばんは、テイラーさん。

B: かおりさん！おはようございます。

A: ？いま、なんじですか。

B: 6じ です。

A: ごぜん？

B: はい、ごぜん6じ です。

Vocabulary

Hide

English | Kana | Rōmaji

ごぜん [ごぜん]
a.m.
1 EXAMPLE
6じ ごぜん 2じです。
It's 2 A.M.

じ [じ]
…o'clock
1 EXAMPLE
2じです。
It's two o'clock.

おはようございます。 [おはようございます。]
Good morning.
1 EXAMPLE
たなかせんせい、おはようございます。
Good morning, Mr. Tanaka.

こんばんは。 [こんばんは。]
Good evening.
2 EXAMPLES
こんばんは、佐藤さん。今日は寒いですね。
Good evening, Ms. Sato, it's cold today.
こんばんは、さとうさん。きょうはさむいですね。
こんばんは!
Good evening!

なんじ [なんじ]
what time
2 EXAMPLES
いまなんじ？
What time is it now? (informal)
いま、なんじですか。
What time is it now?

いま [いま]
now
1 EXAMPLE
いま、なんじですか。
What time is it now?

6じ [ろくじ]
six o'clock
1 EXAMPLE
6じ ですか。
Is it six o'clock?

はい [はい]
yes, that's right
1 EXAMPLE
たなかさんですか。- はい、そうです。
Are you Mr. Tanaka? - Yes, I am.

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Lesson Notes

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Lesson Focus

The Focus of This Lesson Is Asking and Answering What Time It Is.
いま、なんじですか。
ima, nan-ji desu ka.
"What time is it now?"

In this lesson, you'll learn how to ask and answer what time it is.

Asking the Time

We use the question word *nan-ji* to ask the time. *Nan-ji* is a combination of the question word nan, meaning "what," and *ji*, meaning "hour," so you're literally asking "what hour?"

- ***Nan-ji desu ka?*** **→ "What time is it?"**

Telling the Time

Now let's take a look at how to tell the time in Japanese.

For hours, we add *ji* to the number. Please be careful of the special pronunciations of "four o'clock" (*yo-ji*) and "nine o'clock" (*ku-ji*).

JAPANESE	ENGLISH
ichi-ji	1:00
ni-ji	2:00
san-ji	3:00
yo-ji	4:00
go-ji	5:00
roku-ji	6:00
shichi-ji	7:00
hachi-ji	8:00
ku-ji	9:00
jū-ji	10:00
jū-ichi-ji	11:00
jū-ni-ji	12:00
nan-ji	"What time?"

Asking and Telling the Time

We sometimes add ima, meaning "now," in front of *nan-ji desu ka* to ask the current time.

For Example:

1. ***Ima, nan-ji desu ka.***
   いま、なんじ です。
   "What time is it now?"

For telling the time in a formal situation, *desu* usually follows the time expression.

For Example:

1. *Ku-ji* ***desu.***
   くじです。
   "It's nine o'clock."

If you must distinguish between a.m. and p.m., *gozen* or *gogo* precedes the time.
For Example:

1. ***Gozen*** *ku-ji desu.*
   ごぜん くじです。
   "It's nine o'clock **A.M.**"
2. ***Gogo*** *ku-ji desu.*
   ごご くじです。
   "It's nine o'clock **P.M.**"

Practice

How do you say the following times in Japanese?

1. eleven o'clock
2. four o'clock A.M.
3. nine o'clock P.M.

Answers:

1. *jū-ichi-ji*
2. *gozen yo-ji*
3. *gogo ku-ji*

Reference

- *konbanwa, ohayō gozaimasu* (Basic Greetings) → Absolute Beginner Season 1 Lesson 1

Key Vocabulary & Phrases

★ Numbers from Eleven to Nineteen in Japanese

NUMBER	ROMANIZATION	ALTERNATIVE PRONUNCIATION
11	*jū-ichi*	
12	*jū-ni*	
13	*jū-san*	
14	*jū-yon*	*jū-shi*
15	*jū-go*	
16	*jū-roku*	
17	*jū-nana*	*jū-shichi*
18	*jū-hachi*	
19	*jū-kyū*	*jū-ku*

★ Gozen (ごぜん)
Gozen precedes a statement of time and adds the meaning of "A.M." The word order is opposite from English, so be careful! "P.M." in Japanese is *gogo*.

For Example:

1. *gozen ichi-ji*
   "one o'clock a.m."
2. *gogo ichi-ji*
   "one o'clock p.m."

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Grammar

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Below is a list of the grammar points introduced or used in this lesson. Click for a full explanation.

数 kazu number	Introduced
か (1) ka (1) question particle	Used

Lesson Transcript

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